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# The Society for the Preservation and Study of American Wooden Planes

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Volume 1

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About a quarter of a mile down the road and across a small bridge from my front door is a water treatment plant. It is no longer in use, having been replaced by a newer, more efficient system housed in chrome and glass. That has left us a problem. We now have two marvels of technology. One that provides us with clean, fresh water albeit not the best tasting stuff. The other is a monument to the great minds of yesterday. I will leave it to your imagination to mull the hardships if the first was not in place. The second is posing a problem of a different nature.

A local citizen has come forth with a plan to save the old treatment plant. It involves saving all of the buildings, including the ones with the settling and chlorinating tanks, basically large holes, filled with water. These are the oldest buildings. The newer building, c. 1917, houses the double stage steam pump system, a wonder which I cannot explain at all. To refurbish this newer building would cost about \$4.5 million. However, the building and pump do not qualify as historic. The out buildings, of no character and little interest ARE old enough. Therefore to preserve ALL the buildings, a \$15 million project is the only way to save the part of importance. This woman has therefore proposed that she be put in charge of a project to develop the area, while preserving the integrity of the site. Just deed over the property to her and she has backers waiting! Who are these backers? She can't tell us. Not even a politician is dumb enough to fall for that one.

The result is an all-or-nothing proposition. We can either give up all of the of history we have, or deed it over to a person of questionable motive and keep our fingers crossed. No need to discuss the latter option.

Unfortunately, the tool collecting community is divided along similar lines. One group believes that tailgating and auctions are a detriment to the purity of the history. Others are involved only for the commerce and a chance to earn some money. Luckily, there are others who have struck a balance. They realize that something desirable has an intrinsic value and is therefore an item for trade. While that will raise the price of antique tools, our cherished planes included, we must realize that it also raises their value, historically as well as monetarily.

The evidence of this can be seen virtually everywhere you turn. Prices keep climbing at auctions, at flea markets (which have become big business) and antique stores which only recently decided that "tewels" were allowed in the door. Note that it must be pronounced "tewels" in this case so as not to soil the pallet.

If there were ever any question, click on Ebay. Forget that sellers have no idea, many times buyers have no idea! You will notice a trend that the old tool market seems tied to the Stock Market. There is a logical reason for this. If stocks go up, there is money to burn. If stocks go down, there is the mortgage. So if you are looking for a bargain, don't do it when IBM announces higher than expected growth. Wait for the week that Gateway reports decreased sales.

All of this having been said, I have not noticed anyone refusing to eat steak or discontinuing heating their home because of price increases. These price increases we have come to accept, even expect in our more cynical moments. Why should our "toys" be any less susceptible to the rigors of the economy?

To those who would argue that these are pieces of history, I answer, "Yeah and your point is?" I recently did an installation at the Samuel Morse Museum in Poughkeepsie, NY. It was a major job, being installed into a new building that came with a price tag to make our exhibit structures look like a drop in the bucket. I had a conversation with the curator during a lunch break, during which he detailed the massive infighting going on in the museum business. He equated it to the "Publish or Perish" side of the academic world. And there is big money there as well.

Now for another question. If you followed the news earlier this year you might remember the story about a fossil of the earliest known bird being put up for auction amid protests that this was sacrilege and that scientific relics should not be sold. Forgive my ignorance, but what are Grants? If you think about it, people are paid to go dig this stuff up, then publish and go on PAID speaking tours. Yeah, that bone was free.

Sincerely,  
Mark R. Thompson



# The Museum of Woodworking Tools

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THE FAMILY  
**BALDWIN**  
JOURNAL

The Society for the Preservation and Study of American Wooden Planes

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# THE FAMILY **BALDWIN** JOURNAL

The quarterly newsletter of  
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American Wooden Planes

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With permission reference can and will be made to:

AWPIII-A Guide to American Wooden Planes and Their Makers, third edition, by Emil and Martyl Pollak, Astragal Press, 1994.

CAWP-The Catalog of American Wooden Planes, by Michael R. Humphrey, Bacon Street Press, 1991-2000.

BP-British Planemakers from 1700, third edition, by W. L. Goodman, revised by Jane and Mark Rees, Roy Arnbold and Astragal Press, 1993.

SJ-Sign of the Jointer, by Patrick Lasswell, 1998-

## About Bruce Bradley

My interest in collecting tools, particularly wooden planes, came about rather slowly. Almost nineteen years ago I bought an old carpenters chest to use as a coffee table but it wasn't until about six months later I decided it would be nice to have a few old tools to put in it. I've always enjoyed woodworking, old things, and history. My first old tools were a couple of wooden bench planes that I bought at an auction and picked up a few other odds and ends over the next few years to supplement my "collection". Most of those early acquisitions are now long gone, making way for better specimens. However, I still have that first tool chest, and it is serving its' intended purpose, housing old woodworking tools. Actually my first love is tool chests, but as they tend to take up a lot of room and a lot of my tool budget, my collecting has turned to the wooden plane. I started collecting tools as many of us have, buying anything and everything. It took a few years to get myself settled into a direction for my collecting to take and of all the first tools I bought I liked the wooden plane the best. My collecting of wooden planes has changed directions several times. As Mike Humphrey has described of his own collection, it is fluid. I think this best describes my collection.

I would like to share with you my two favorite "finds". I say "finds" because I didn't actually find them, they found me. The first is a carpenters chest that belonged to my great, great, great grandfather. Not long after I started getting serious about collecting tools word got around to relatives and one of my uncles said he had a chest of tools that I could have if I wanted it. Boy, did I! It is an almost complete set of tools dating to the 1830s including 24 planes, most made by upstate New York makers. The chest is large with tiger and bird's-eye maple and walnut burl veneer inlay. It had been stored in a barn for years and everything was filthy dirty but after two weeks of cleaning and repairing I had a prize possession. Don't ever expect to see this one come on to the tool market.

A couple of years ago I was at a local estate auction and an acquaintance of mine walked up to me and asked if I would be interested in a plane he picked up recently. He described it to me as best he could. He is not a tool person, but a dealer in general antiques. I couldn't believe what he was describing. We left the auction and went to his house. In the garage on top of a few boxes was a Tidey patent double beveling plane. He knew it was a good plane but didn't know how good. I gladly gave him his asking price and now it resides with me.



I became involved with this venture when I responded to an ad placed in another publication by mark Thompson. Mark was looking for information regarding planes marked M. CARR. As it happened I had just found a pair of match planes a few months earlier with that imprint. Realizing our collecting interests were very similar Mark decided we should start a little club. Had I known what I was in for...

Well here we are with a hundred plus members and a quarterly newsletter. Who knew?

Bruce E. Bradley

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## EARLY WOODWORKING PLANES

by pat Lasswell

1680-1820

The period of 1680 through about 1820 covers the first emergence of known planemakers through the final stages of individual craftsmen who still worked at their own benches. These men, and their workers, created products that not only followed time honored traditions, but fashioned tools that were often uniquely their own. Molding planes manufactured in England and North America follow gradually changing trends that can be characterized and placed within this general time framework. The following somewhat arbitrary date divisions should help in defining these stylistic changes.

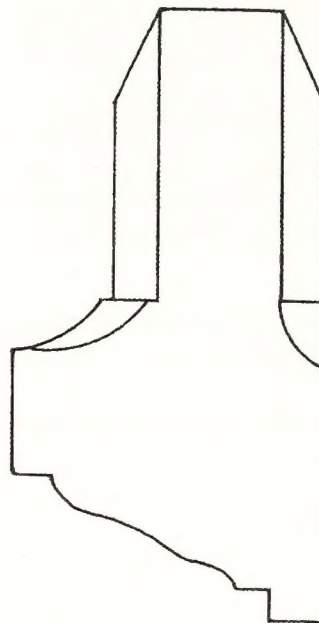
Ca 1700

While this article deals with both English and North American planes, the earliest known plane makers to date, are English. Since most North American planes followed English patterns, the consideration of the earliest English planes should accurately describe their North American counterparts.

John Davenport, of London, is recorded in 1680 as being made free of the Jointer s Company . (1) Thomas Granford, of London, is recorded as joining the Jointer s Company in 1687. (2) Thomas also ran an ad in 1703 advertising the sale of his tools. (3) Both of these men are amongst the earliest recorded planemakers.

Their planes are relatively few and show fairly consistent details. The planes are from about 10 5/16 long to about 10 7/8 long. The flat chamfers are at least 1/2 wide and are mostly on the sides.

The chamfers end with steps followed by a dramatic turn-out. The shoulders are finished with a step followed with a deep, steeply pitched hollow.



The wedges have a round finial with a fairly short cut-out under the finial. (Note that the one plane marked Thomas Granford has a relief to the wedge finial.) Finally, the molding planes are made with out spring.

Ca 1725

Francis Nicholson of first Rehoboth and later Wrentham, Massachusetts is amongst the earliest documented planemakers in the American colonies. He was born about 1683 and died in 1753, with working dates starting around 1716. (4) The earlier planes made by Francis vary from 9 3/4 to just over 10 in length. The flat chamfers are around 3/8 in width and are mostly on the sides. The shoulders are usually stepped, but are not as steep as earlier planes. As is common with 18<sup>th</sup> century New England planes, birch is the common wood used. The wedge finials are round and the cut-outs under the finials tend to be long and straight. Francis earliest planes have chamfers, on the reverse, which end with a tipped step followed by a long tapered flute. Other New England planemakers of this period may include N. Potter, I Pike and Joseph Clark. (5)

Robert Wooding, of London, England, apprenticed to Thomas Granford in 1693. Robert was admitted to the Jointer s Company in 1704. (6) His early planes are about 10 to 10 1/4 in length. The flat chamfers are similar in detail as Francis Nicholson s planes. The reverse chamfers end

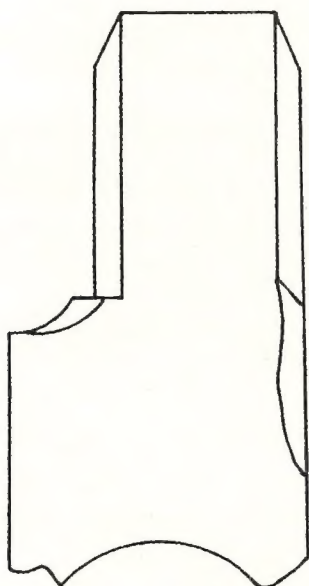


with slight steps followed by a turn-out. Wedge cut-outs under the finial tend to continue the pattern of curved arcs similar to earlier periods. Colonial and English planes are found both with and without spring.

#### Ca 1750

Planes from mid-century are similar in many ways from the planes of ca 1730. The chamfers are a bit narrower, now  $\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  in width, but are still found mostly on the sides. New England plane chamfers on the reverse end in a variety of ways, from long flutes to simple turn-outs. English planes continue with a simple chamfer turn-out on the reverse. Wedge finials are still rounded with some New England makers adopting a somewhat boxy finial style. Cut-outs under the finial tend to follow gentle arcs with the English makers, while New England makers tend to use a straight cut. Lengths still range from a bit over 10 to  $9\frac{3}{4}$ . Most planes were made with spring.

There are many recorded planemakers from the mid-century period. Cesar Chelor, Francis Nicholson's freed slave, began working on his own after 1753. Other New England makers include: E Taft of Mendon, Henry Wetherel of Norton, Ion Ballou of Providence, E Briggs in Keen, A Hide of Norwich and John Walton of Reading. (7)



Mid-Atlantic planemakers tend to follow the English planemakers of the period. The planes tend to appear refined and straightforward without a lot of variation. These planes are still 10 to  $9\frac{3}{4}$  in length and the chamfers are bold and flat.

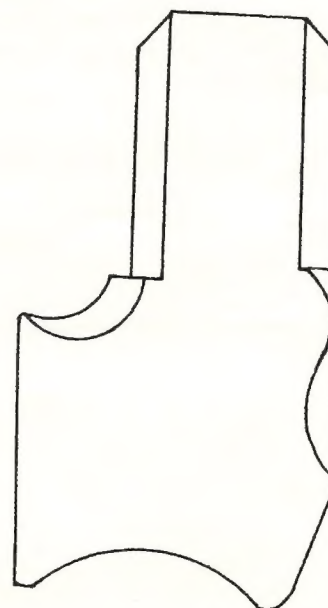
They tend to be about  $\frac{5}{16}$  in width and end with simple turn-outs on the reverse. Beech is the wood of choice. Mid-Atlantic plane makers of the period include Samuel Caruthers of Philadelphia and Thomas Grant of New York City. (8)

English planemakers include John Cogdell, William Madox, John Jennion and Thomas Phillipson. (9)

#### Ca 1780

English planes later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, begin to standardize in length at  $9\frac{1}{2}$ . The flat chamfers usually remain around  $\frac{1}{4}$  in width, while heavy round chamfers start to appear. Generally wedge finials remain rounded, but hints of a swept back style can be seen in the larger cities. Makers include, William Moss, Christopher Gabriel, George Mutter and John Sym. (10)

New England planes remain about the same in length:  $9\frac{3}{4}$  to 10. The flat chamfers are more evenly placed between the top and the sides. Wedge finials remain rounded with some makers using a relief on the rear of the finial next to the iron. The cut-outs under the finial become more curved, similar to the English form. A stylized fluting appears on the reverse heel and toes of planes made in southeast Massachusetts as well as in Connecticut and Rhode Island.



New England makers include John Lindenberger, Joseph Fuller, E Clark, and Joshua Wilbur. (11)

Mid-Atlantic makers include Benjamin Armitage, James Stiles and Robert Parrish. (12)



## Ca 1800 to 1820

In the new United States republic, the recognizable traits of the 18<sup>th</sup> century blend into the standard plane design of the 19<sup>th</sup> century between the years 1800 and 1820. These 19<sup>th</sup> century details include: a 9 1/2 length, boxing, gently rounded chamfers which end with a gouge cut that extends beyond the chamfer width, a swept back finial and the use of beech.

This blending takes on many forms. Ca. 1800 planes may be made of birch, yet often are 9 1/2 in length. Top chamfers may be rounded, but the end chamfers may be flat. The planes can have round or swept back finials. It's rather hard to characterize these planes. (Indeed, a late 18<sup>th</sup> century plane may have been made in 1810 or 1790.)

Many of the New England planemakers, such as Fuller, Lindenberger and Aaron Smith, who began in the later 1700s, worked well into the 1800s. Their planes show this transition of style. (13)

New England planemakers starting during this time include Leonard Kennedy, I Blossom and D Presbrey. Mid-Atlantic makers include Thomas Goldsmith and Robert Eastburn. (14)

English planes seemed to standardize to the 19<sup>th</sup> century style around 1790. In the typical manner, their products lead the American planes by about 20 years. Makers include Moseley, Thomas Benton and John Griffiths. (15)

(1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 15) British Planemakers from 1700, W.L. Goodman, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

(4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14) A Guide to the makers of American Wooden Planes, E & M Pollack, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

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## From the Editor

To date we haven't had much member participation in the form of response to questions raised in The Forum or The Round Table but it's early yet and I know sometimes it's hard to find the time to respond to requests for information. There are several individuals who are waiting for some information from me pertaining to tools. To them I apologize, I hope I can get to it soon.

About three weeks ago I bought a new computer, in part to make editing this newsletter an easier job. One thing always leads to another. It has taken most of three weeks to get all the new hardware and software working happily together. My new computer didn't like my old scanner, my new computer didn't like my new scanner, but my new computer is happy with my newest scanner, etc. A long story made short.

You may have notice that we have gone to more pages in this issue and we expect to keep it at this number for future issues. If this issue looks a bit choppy or confused it's that I was running out of time to get this issue in the mail before our self imposed deadline and the additional pages meant setting up a new form. Bear with me, we'll get it figured out eventually.

By the way, membership is at about 140, quite good I'd say for the small amount of time we've actually been in existence. Keep in mind we are always looking for anyone who is willing to actively participate in any and all fazes of this endeavor. One of the projects planned is a membership directory which will probably be updated annually.

If you're not already planning to attend Brown's tool auction in Harrisburg next October here is another reason to be there. The first annual meeting of "The Society for the Preservation and Study of American Wooden Planes" will take place on Friday evening the 19th.

Again, any comments, suggestions, or information is most welcome.

Bruce



## The Forum

If any of you have or know of planes with the following makers marks we'd like to hear about it:

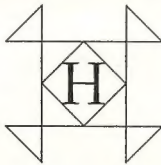
M. CARR, S. FELCH, C. SHEPARD, I. BARNS, J. MILLER/CENTERBERG

Information regarding S. Felch and J. Miller will be published in the next newsletter.

Anyone interested in assisting doing research on New York City planemakers please contact Mark Thompson or Bruce Bradley. This will be an ongoing project with no deadline at this time.

Last year I acquired four planes with new imprints which, like most new imprints, raise more questions than they answer. These planes reportedly came from a cabinet makers shop in Peru! All four planes have typical 19th century characteristics: beech, approximately 9 1/2" long, and rounded chamfers.

The first plane is a single boxed 5/8" side bead. The imprint on the nose reads "*E. Humphreys y Ca*" (in script) which would be E. Humphreys & Co. The second plane is a 1 1/4" ogee. In addition to the Humphreys imprint it has a logo as below stamped on the toe.



The third plane is a 1" ogee with the number 728 on the heel and a smaller version of the logo above. The nose is imprinted "SAUERLAND HATCH & Co" / BIRMINGHAM". The fourth plane is a 1/2" center bead, double boxed. The heel is imprinted No 126. Here is where things really get interesting. The toe is imprinted with the H. Chapin/Union Factory "B" imprint, the small "H" logo mentioned above, and the script Humphreys logo, this time in a semi-circle.

A fifth plane which I unfortunately did not acquire had a Humphreys decal on the side, other markings I don't know. None of the irons are marked.

Was E. Humphreys an importer? Exporter? Dealer? I assume the "H" logo was his. Who is Sauerland Hatch & Co.? A manufacturer? And which Birmingham? US or Great Britain? Any ideas?

Bruce

## The Roundtable

The panel: Rich DeAvlia, Tom Elliot, Dave Englund, Mike Humphrey, Ted Ingraham, Pat Lasswell, and of course all members are invited to share thier knowledge and opinions.

This question is left over from the last newsletter. Who was the first American planemaker to use screw arms on his plow planes? Who made the first handled plow? Send in your candidates email or snail mail.

I didn't get any opinions so I'll share what I have. The earliest screw arm plow I've seen was made by T.J.M'Master between 1825 and 1839 but I suspect he was not the first and there are probably earlier ones. The earliest handled plow I've observed was made by A&E Baldwin between 1830 and 1841. Any earlier candidates?

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## Our Web Site is Up and Running!

Check out our web site at: [www.woodenplane.org](http://www.woodenplane.org)

There is a lot of good information here including close-up views of known Baldwin imprints, some other rare maker's imprints, general Society information, up-coming events, and lots of other good stuff. Well worth a look.

Many thanks to Larry Russo for getting this set up. Nice job, Larry. Also thanks to Joel Mathison for providing the space. If you haven't already, check out "The Museum of Woodworking Tools" at his site at [www.toolsforworkingwood.com](http://www.toolsforworkingwood.com) and [www.antiquetools.com](http://www.antiquetools.com).

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I recently conducted an on-line interview with Pat Lasswell, who in addition to being the VP of our central region, is the creator & editor of The Sign of the Jointer, an excellent journal dedicated to research of American wooden plane makers.

Pat's journal predates the founding of our group by about a year and a half, in which time he has done some exciting work.

*Baldwin;* What gave you the idea for The Sign of the Jointer ?

*Jointer;* The journal or the name?

*Baldwin;* Both.

*Jointer;* Fair enough. The journal came about because Mike Humphrey was ending his publication, The Catalog Of America Wooden Planes. (His journal took over Plane T a l k's work)

I couldn't bear to see the flow of information stop. I hoped the Jointer would serve as an outlet or clearinghouse for plane & planemaker information. I hope that is happening.

*Baldwin;* I'd say it is. I thought it would be a sad thing to be without a journal about wooden planes. Okay, what about the name?

*Jointer;* I've been very keen about researching and collecting newspaper ads; Caruthers, Niles, Armitage, etc. One early "find" was an 1787 illustrated ad by John Lindenger. Not only was this ad unknown (unpublished), but I was also able to purchase this newspaper (The Wings included this ad in an article in Plane Talk). John Lindenger's shop in Providence was found "At the Sign of The Jointer." I liked the name and of course the reference.

*Baldwin;* That's a great story. There seems to be a different flavor to The Jointer as compared to The Catalog. Was that intentional? How do you see the differences?

*Jointer;* I think there will be a difference between editors just as Mike's publication varied from Plane Talk. Mike's Catalog was great and provided a wealth of information. It was a good model to follow. I like the visual appeal of the planes themselves. What better way to discuss them than to have full sized drawings and plenty of pictures? I have to admit, these hand made planes have a beauty to them. Why not share them and provide possible links and clue, too. It seems like once the information is shared more pours in, so it's

best just to get as much as possible out to our fellow collectors and researchers. Who knows what may spark additional knowledge and insight? One thing I've tried to do is get others to write articles such as the one on Jo Williams. As you know, there isn't time to do it all. Besides, there are many experts out there with more knowledge. They have much to contribute. It's a matter of getting the contribution.

*Baldwin;* Yes, it is tough. I sometimes find myself spinning from one task to the next. It's nice when someone pitches in to help (note the poorly disguised solicitation for both journals.)

I notice that you concentrate on 18th century tools. Is that your primary interest or is there some other reason?

*Jointer;* I am actually a bit reluctant to cover the 18th century as much as I do. It's both practical and personal. It's personal because that's where my interests lie. I don't deny that an 18th century tote can be a thing of beauty! Besides a majority of new information is for early makers.

It's practical because without articles from others, I tend to reflect on what I think I know. But I would really like to have broader group of topics and articles.

*Baldwin;* Where do you see the Jointer going in the future?

*Jointer;* That's somewhat hard to, predict. Other than additional coverage of the 19th century, I think a great opportunity lies in a website. New information comes in fits and spurts. With Tom's (Elliott) book coming out later this year, I trust it will be a watershed for all of us. Most of all, I look forward to greater circulation and contributions from readers. After all, what you and I are trying to do is enrich the world of wooden plane collectors and researchers.

*Baldwin;* Anything else you think our readers would like to know?

*Jointer;* More than anything else, I would like folks to come away with a richer appreciation for the earlier days--- to put some flesh on these names and imprints --- to, in some way, fill a link back to the past. There's an inherent shared appreciation to the lines, the curves, the beauty of the woods, even though these were just tools to be used.

*Baldwin;* When I am speaking to a non-collector,



I have found that it's easier to equate the plane to a time in history and sort of tell a story. For example, when it is obvious that the planes are just sticks to someone and they can't understand why I would want them, I pull out 3 planes. I explain that the first is possibly the oldest and an import. The second is one that was made in NYC. However, the fellow who made it did not like the way things were going in the city, thanks to a fellow named George and he left New York for the suburbs. He moved in with the fellow who made the third plane.

The first is an I. Cox, the second a Tho. Grant and the third an R. Eastburn. And that was George Washington causing all that trouble. As I have been handing each to them in order, they suddenly realize the history that took place while these tools were used. It gets easier to explain then.

So you feel that your journal is a "Work in Progress". I like to suggest to our readers that they keep looking at their collections with critical eye. I'm sure there are still loads of discoveries to be made in the basements and dens of long time collectors. I recently discovered that I had an E.C. Ring with the cyma spindle cartouche!

*Jointer*; That's the truth! A J. Stall toted molder was recently offered on Ebay by a long time collector. I emailed him that it was a new mark. He was convinced that it was the same as the listing in Pollak III. I pointed out that it was a "J" Stall, not an "I" Stall. I've got a rubbing and pictures and new information is provided. Fun, isn't it?

*Baldwin*; You bet. We were never taught history as anything other than dates and places. When it becomes a living process, it becomes a passion.

*Pat Lasswell is the VP for the central zone of The Society as well as the publisher of **The Sign of the Jointer**. The subscription rate is \$10.00 per year. To contact Pat to subscribe;*

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6211 Elmgrove Rd.  
Spring, TX. 77389

Tele.#  
281-251-3121

email  
pmlasswell@infohwy.com

## Up-coming Events

April 6 & 7-Dan Connolly Auction and Brown's dealer sale. Radisson Inn, Camp Hill (Harrisburg), PA

April 21-Crafts Auction. Flemmington, NJ

April 27 & 28-Live Free or Die Auction. Nashua, NH

May 30-June 2-E.A.I.A. annual meeting. Lancaster, PA

September 14 & 15-Live Free Or Die Auction. Nashua, NH

October 19 & 20-Brown's annual Auction and dealer sale. Harrisburg, PA

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# The Trading Post

Wanted: A pair of size 4 and 6 hollows and rounds by A&E Baldwin. Also any hollow or round larger than a size 20. They must be in good to excellent condition. The imprint type is not important, condition is. Please contact Bruce Bradley at 315-331-6323 or email [bbradle1@rochester.rr.com](mailto:bbradle1@rochester.rr.com)

Wanted: Planes by C. R. Wells. Looking for the following hollows and rounds: Hollows 4/8 and 8/8. Round 12/8.

Also hollows and rounds imprinted John Moseley & Son / 54-55 Broad St Bloomsbury / London: Hollows 3, 10, and 15. Rounds 3, 7, and 12. Contact J.B. Cox at 6802 Nesbitt Pl., McLean, VA 22101 or 703 821 2931 or [jbjocox@earthlink.net](mailto:jbjocox@earthlink.net)

For sale: Ogee by I. Cox. Marked 1 INCH on the heel, width of cut is about 1 1/4". Not warped, should be useable. Condition is good+. Price is \$35 shipping included. Please contact Bruce Bradley at 315-331-6323 or email [bbradle1@rochester.rr.com](mailto:bbradle1@rochester.rr.com)

For Sale. E. Nutting 26" jointer. "B" imprint. Front surface of wedge is rough from being struck, one side of handle tip gone. Usual nicks and dings but not much wear. Price is \$25 plus shipping. Please contact Bruce Bradley at 315-331-6323 or email [bbradle1@rochester.rr.com](mailto:bbradle1@rochester.rr.com)

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Congratulations and Our Very Best Wishes to

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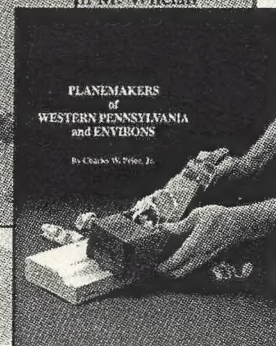
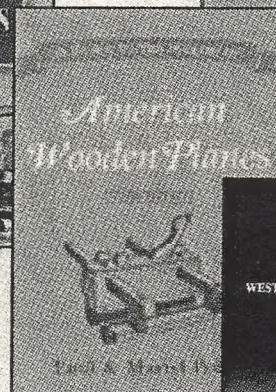
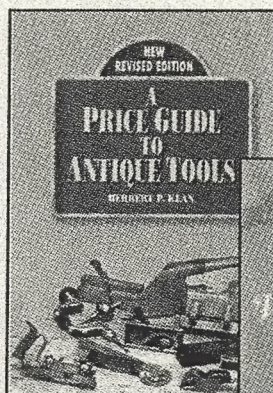
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